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more serious and often fatal illnesses. These are inflicted by the malignant spirits of the dead. Lastly, there is the category of illnesses brought about by the living sorcerer, which must prove fatal unless the sorcerer himself remove their cause.

The late W. N. Beaver wrote that 'the veriest tyro in Papua will pronounce that no native is ever believed to die naturally'.[1] Even if one include the second of the above categories among the causes of death which are in native belief not natural, Mr. Beaver's generalization would still, I think, be an over-statement. At any rate it would be an over-statement to say that 'when a death occurs every one thinks it was due to sorcery'. The truth is more nearly represented thus: 'when a death occurs there is always some one who thinks it was due to sorcery.' The majority of those who are not closely affected by a man's death simply accept the fact without question. They do not believe that a sorcerer has robbed him of immortality. He died as every man has got to die. But with the friends and relatives of the deceased the case may be different. The grief of bereavement is likely to turn into anger against things in general, and this comprehensive anger is likely to be focused upon the object of some previous enmity, one against whom the bereaved or the deceased may have had a standing grudge. The suspicion of foul play easily springs into the mind of one who is ill used by fortune. He casts about for some one to blame, and fixes upon his enemy. Evidently he did not do the mischief openly; therefore he must have done it covertly. He was in fact the guilty sorcerer. Even some trifling misfortune may be enough to arouse the suspicion of black magic. A man setting out on a long journey is overtaken by bad weather and has to build himself a bush shelter and wait for the rain to cease. No doubt he has time to brood over the annoyance, for he arrives at the conclusion that the untimely downpour has been brought about by one of his neighbours who

[1] *Papua Ann. Report*, 1914–15, p. 30.

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bears him a personal grudge and merely wishes to vent his spite.

It is not always an enemy who receives the blame. Any piece of circumstantial evidence may be sufficient to implicate the innocent, and especially so if he be an old man; for there is apparently a kind of *mana* about old age which argues a special fitness for sorcery. To sum up, one may say that, while it is not true that misfortune, sickness, and death are invariably ascribed to sorcery, the suspicion of it is nevertheless extremely common; and one might go so far as to say that almost every death is ascribed to sorcery in the opinion of some one or other.

An example will show how baseless the suspicion may be. In the village of Aurida on the Opi was to be seen a miniature house, not much larger than that which commonly accommodates a pet cockatoo or hornbill. It contained as perpetual inmate a little girl whose limbs were so twisted as to be quite useless. Some years back, as she said herself, she used to play with the other children until this disease overtook her and slowly turned her into a cripple. As a very little child she had been the great pet of her old *nobo*, or maternal uncle, who had been in the habit of dandling her in his lap. The old man had died before I heard of this case. He had never hinted at making magic against the child, and maybe he was never openly accused of doing so, but there was no doubt in the village that he had been the cause of the terrible malady which eventually ended in her death. No real reason could be found, but the fact that she was so often in his arms was enough cause for suspicion which in time turned to certainty.

The same village provided a somewhat amusing incident which serves to show the ramifications of evil which may arise from a false accusation. One Josiva of a neighbouring village brought a charge of sorcery against an old man of Aurida. He evidently wished to make a court case of it, for he enlisted the aid of three village con-